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ABSTRACT

In response to new responsibilities that have come about as a result of the arts (dance, music, theater arts, and visual arts) being included in the basic curriculum in North Carolina, this monograph discusses the many approaches to interrelating different areas of the curriculum. The monograph responds to the following questions: (1) "Why Should I Integrate?"; (2) "How Do I Integrate?"; (3) "What Are Some of the Ways I Can Make Connections?"; and (4) "How Do I Make These Connections Understood?" The monograph concludes that the fundamental premise is that public education is an initial preparation for adult life and that the goal continues to be, more than ever, to provide students with an education in the arts reinforced through the recognition that the arts do not exist alone but are an integral part of life. (BT)

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Monograph No. 1 1997 Arts Education Series

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DANCE

MUSIC

THEATRE ARTS

VISUAL ARTS

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Public Schools of North Carolina
State Board of Education
Jay Robinson, Chairman
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Arts Education: Integrating with Reading, Writing, Math and Other Areas of the Curriculum

Why Should I Integrate?

The public as a whole and thus the legislature, the State Board of Education, business and industry, and others have sent a clear message that students' mastery of reading, writing, and mathematics should be the prime focus of the public schools. This derives from the perception that without these functional skills, students will be unable to work effectively in other curriculum areas and in society as a whole. The implication of this message is that all educators will necessarily have to contribute to the achievement of these basic skills. It becomes the responsibility and duty of every educator to help students see relationships to these areas throughout all curricula and to develop fundamental skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. Therefore in the midst of education reform, we find ourselves having to determine whether we are going to be a part of the problem or a part of the solution. Effective arts educators have long been a part of the solution, but we need to play a more overt role in letting others see and understand how we support reading, writing and mathematics in the classroom and in providing leadership to other educators. This stance can only broaden our impact, increase our visibility, make our programs more desirable, and demonstrate the value of student achievement throughout the total school curriculum.

The New ABCs of Public Education program has currently created an urgent need for the arts to support reading, writing and mathematics. If at some point in the future, the ABCs should be de-emphasized, we would still be left with the long-range question: "Why are the arts first on the list when cutbacks occur?" The simple answer is that, while we are appreciated for our products and enjoyed by many individuals, the arts are fundamentally not widely *perceived* as being *basic* education.

In the past, we have tended to look at production/performance as the chief end for arts curricula. Our new responsibilities have come about chiefly as a result of our being included in the basic curriculum, as opposed to being formerly extracurricular. As arts educators, we do not have to choose between quality performance and integrating arts instruction with the rest of the curriculum. Integration does not minimize or otherwise adversely affect quality performance. In fact, it enhances production/performance by giving students a better understanding of what they are doing and, more often than not, significantly improves the resulting performance or product because of this understanding.

Those who would call for the teaching of art for arts sake fail to understand the breadth of what is implied in the arts. The arts do not exist in a vacuum and need to be connected to life and learning as much as possible. Integration is <u>not</u> a way of "justifying" the arts by relating them to reading, writing and mathematics. It is a way of showing how the arts are fundamentally connected to all other branches of knowledge and how those branches are connected to the arts.

How Do I Integrate?

There are many approaches to interrelating different areas of the curriculum. Some of the more common are:

Correlation - This manner of teaching uses a casual, complementary, parallel or reciprocal relationship, especially a structural, functional, or qualitative relationship between two comparable subject areas. In the study of Norway, we might teach students to sing a Norwegian song.

Fusion - This is a way of blending subjects together, such as teaching science through the arts, where arts activities are used to teach other subjects without necessarily focusing on teaching the arts, per se. An example might be where metamorphosis is taught using creative drama without any primary focus on theatre arts.

Interconnection - The intent of this procedure is to connect knowledge by bringing relevant parts together to increase the effectiveness of learning and improve the use of knowledge. Two of the primary ways this is carried out are:

Integrated Thematic Units - draws various subject components together by teaching them in relation to a specific idea or common theme. For example, teaching math, theatre arts, science and social studies lessons based around life in ancient Egypt.

Finding Relationships/Connections - relates knowledge in a specific subject area to that of another, i.e. the concept of proportions in the study of music intervals to proportions in mathematics, etc.

These are only a few of the approaches to relating subject matter and each is effective in its own way. However, the needs of the ABCs of Public Education program, particularly in regard to raising test scores, make it critical to focus on finding and establishing relationships/ connections between subject areas so that students can use them to make their understandings clearer and apply them to test items. These specific relationships/connections abound in the arts and do not need to be contrived, but only recognized and used.

What Are Some Of The Ways I Can Make Connections?

Mutual Connections

There are **mutual connections** between arts education areas and English language arts and mathematics. These occur so naturally that they often go unnoticed. They are equally important to the study in all of these areas. The following skills are taken from the English language arts and mathematics curricula. These skills parallel similar ones found throughout the four arts education curricula. Some of these skills are:

English language arts

Define and analyze assigned tasks
Anticipate content and organization
Relate prior knowledge and personal experiences to a topic
Search for sense or a "lead"
Predict outcomes
Use personal experience while redefining and composing meaning
Interpret the meaning of, or draw conclusions from, the selection or activity to a discussion
Recognize details and concepts related to prior predictions and questions
Create an organizational framework for retaining information
Compare information and ideas
Solve problems, make decisions and inferences, or draw conclusions based on interpretation of information
Identify faulty reasoning
Determine practicality and usefulness of information or ideas in light of purposes
Express emotional reactions and personal opinions and relate personal values to a selection or experience
Associate personal values and beliefs with content of a selection
Make relevant, logical, coherent contributions

Mathematics

Use estimation appropriately
Describe attributes, make comparisons, and create sequences
Develop and apply strategies in solving routine and non-routine problems
Make conjectures and arguments using deductive and inductive reasoning
Compare /describe similarities and differences
Identify/correct errors in patterns
Order objects and events; use ordinal numbers

General Connections

The following list of **general connections** is no way meant to be exhaustive but does give some examples of the natural relationships between the arts and reading, writing, and mathematics.

Reading

The approach to listening to a new piece of music is virtually identical to that used in reading a new story for the first time

The process used to analyze dramatic text in theatre arts closely parallels that used in English language arts to analyze any written work

The analytical skills used in analyzing a reading passage are similar to those taught to view and analyze a painting, sculpture or other work of art

Writing

The process used to write plays in theatre arts is inherently the same as that used to teach writing in English language arts

The writing skills needed to write a critique or analyze artwork in visual arts are the same as those required in English language arts

The creation of choreography in dance follows very closely the procedure used to teach writing in English language arts

Mathematics

The mathematics principles used in designing and constructing scenery in theatre arts are the same as those used in geometry, algebra, and physics.

The geometric shapes, proportions and relationships used in visual arts are those used in mathematics

Specific Connections

The following are examples of **specific connections** that may be made between the four arts areas and reading, writing and mathematics. There are literally countless connections that may be made quite naturally throughout the study in each area. These connections not only serve to link the various areas of study to all other learning but, also, enhance meaning, make learning more relevant, and demonstrate that all learning contributes in a utilitarian way to helping us understand and function in everyday life. Students who recognize these connections will appreciate the learning they have already accomplished, gain an understanding of how things relate and/or fit together, and see life and learning as interrelated. Integrating learning frequently promotes the use of intuition, making inference, and creative thinking, all of which are key elements in the study of dance, music, theatre arts and visual arts.

Reading

Theatre Arts - In preparing to perform in theatre arts, various ways of reading are taught. Students may first read to get the general idea of the play and look for literary devices. Secondly, they may read to determine the structure to include rising and falling action, crisis, and climax. They may also read to analyze their own character's motivations and relationships to the other characters and the plot. Lastly, they might read to determine the implications for interpretation of lines and movements.

Music - Effective reading of music notation requires the student to read ahead, determine phrases and the overall structure, locate accents, interpret symbols and verbal indications, and discriminate between the main and subordinate ideas.

Dance - Dance can be created to interpret almost anything in the written word. Teachers often use various forms of literature and written material from other subject areas to generate dance compositions.

Visual Arts - A visual art work is "read" in a way similar to that used in English language arts. The student must first perceive the work as a whole and then relate the subordinate parts to the whole in such a way as to see the relationships and contributions of these parts. The student is also encouraged to "read" artworks in different ways looking for new connections and emphases.

Writing

Dance - Journal keeping includes defining personal goals, analysis of healthy and unhealthy practices, etc. The steps of the choreographic process (brainstorming and improvisation, selecting and ordering movements, revision, rehearsal, performance, and evaluation) are similar to the writing process used in English language arts.

Music - Writing music phrases, sections, and compositions using notation symbols involves many of the same processes used in English language arts. Writing reports about composers, styles, and forms also parallels this process.

Theatre Arts - The script writing process involves the identical writing process suggested in English language arts to include prewriting, putting thoughts down on paper, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing in addition to implementing one or more of the styles and forms used in writing plays.

Visual Arts - In English language arts, prewriting activities for the primary grades are drawing, remembering/visualizing, talking/thinking, class discussion, and observing. All of these same activities are taught as part of preparing to create visual art works as well as often leading to pre- or post-writing assignments given in conjunction with making art. Observing is a primary activity in visual arts study since much of preparing to do art, doing art and appreciating art significantly involves perceiving through the use of the five senses.

Mathematics

Dance - In the creation and execution of dance, a variety of related concepts are used including symmetrical and asymmetrical shapes; sequencing; geometric forms and designs; relationships between metered time and fractions; organized problem-solving skills; patterns (rhythm, movement and body shape) and measurement (metric, movement and breath).

Music - Like, unlike and empty sets in mathematics are the same as music measures with similar/dissimilar rhythm or melody patterns or measures with no notes in them. Greater than, less than or equal correlates with comparing music intervals, dynamics and/or rhythm values (fractions - rhythm and meter). Proportions in mathematics equate to relationships between music intervals and/or rhythm values. Reciprocals in mathematics relate directly to inversions of music intervals (perfect fourth to perfect fifth, major third to minor sixth, etc.).

Theatre Arts - In the design and building process used to create scenery, numerous mathematical skills must be learned and employed. To design and/or construct a simple door flat with a half-round window above it, a student would have to measure and use measurement tools, add, subtract, multiply, divide, create angles, implement geometric principles and use geometry tools, express numbers to communicate, use proportion, use mathematical problem-solving skills, and other math concepts.

Visual Arts - During the process of creating a painting or sculpture, students might explore spatial relationships to include the concepts of more or less, proportion, recognition of one- two- or three- dimensional shapes, identification and use of patterns, measurement and use of measurement tools, measurement of liquids, estimation of space and distance, identification and /or making plane and solid figures, and description and/or creation of 3-dimensional objects from different perspectives.

How Do I Make These Connections Understood?

Be Knowledgeable

It is paramount that arts educators be able to clearly articulate how and why their area of the curriculum contributes to the education of students especially in relationship to reading, writing, and mathematics. This should go beyond merely citing the general values of arts education to actually promoting the ideas and concepts advocated in the North Carolina Teacher Handbook Arts Education K-12, (1995 revision) and providing real-world classroom examples of how all this happens. The need for students to thoroughly understand the relationship of the arts to life and learning mandates that teaching should encompass all aspects of each curriculum they study. This study should not focus only on

selected parts of the curriculum. The entire curriculum in each area should be taught.

Communicate With Others

It is necessary to become familiar with the content in other curriculum areas and make every effort to incorporate relevant information, concepts and skills into instruction. It is also necessary to overtly demonstrate an awareness and effort to make learning connected to the total school curriculum. This can effectively be done through class and homework assignments, information sheets sent to parents, and dialogue with students all of which emphasize the relationship between arts study and other subject areas. It is important in dialogue with other staff and administration, parents, businesses, and the community to demonstrate and/or explain clearly that the arts are directly related and significantly relevant to general education. In fact, because learning takes place in a number of different ways, for many students the arts may be critical to achieving much of the fundamental knowledge and skills needed for adult life. To achieve this end, it is vital that every teacher adopt an attitude to continuously make connections and show relationships throughout instruction. It is equally vital to model this behavior for students so that it becomes a way of thinking and doing for them as well. Ultimately, the more students can interrelate their knowledge, the more useful it will be to them.

Focus On Curriculum and Instruction - Not Product/ Performance

For many years dance, music, theatre arts and visual arts have been viewed as extracurricular with the primary outcome being to produce products or performances. Since the practical application of the study in each area has been to produce products or performances, we have readily displayed the results of our instruction and allowed others to think these products or performances were the only end result of our time intensive instruction. This has created mistaken impressions among those who would be our advocates and our enemies. These products or performances were, indeed, the end result but far from the reason we should be teaching arts education. The knowledge and skills acquired during the process of studying the arts has always been the real purpose of arts education and this *is* basic to public education. Therefore, it is vital that we make every effort to demonstrate how we arrive at the products and performances students make and do, and show how the educational processes that are used benefit the total education of all students.

Change Public Understanding

It is imperative that visual art teachers K-12 not just hang an art exhibit but make use of descriptions, videos, student docents, or other methods to illustrate and explain how students created and produced the art as well as what they learned in the process. The same is true for performances. Dance, music and theatre arts teachers K-12 should consider presenting "informances" where verbal, video or other pre-performance explanations and/or demonstrations of how students prepared for the presentation are utilized to increase the understanding of what students have learned. When possible, teachers should design presentations that incorporate and actively demonstrate learning skills which also relate to many other areas of the curriculum. The public and students should be led to understand what has been assimilated through

the process and that students learn to learn through arts study. They should not be allowed to assume that what the audience sees is only talent or is done with little effort or thought. The fact that people have been allowed to make these assumptions has contributed to the reality that often arts education is not considered or understood to be fundamental to the curriculum.

Promote Parent Involvement

In many cases, arts education teachers have been some of the most effective of all teachers in securing parent involvement. However, this has often been connected with production/ performance, placing undue emphasis on the product rather than the process. While there is nothing inherently wrong with involving parents at the stage of production/performance, the more critical need for future support is to increase parental understanding of the arts process in student learning which will ultimately lead to a fundamental comprehension of it. Some ways of increasing involvement are to encourage parents to:

- visit and observe instruction and learning in the classroom
- ask questions about instruction, assignments and learning in the classroom
- read, respond to, and/or question written correspondence regarding learning and instruction
- engage in conferences and discuss openly the instruction and learning their students receive
- become familiar with the subject area curriculum to know what students should be learning
- maintain an on-going open dialogue with the students and teachers regarding instruction and learning
- support and foster student learning at home.

Conclusion

In this time of education reform, it is tempting to follow the old saying that "the more things change, the more they stay the same," and continue where we have been in the belief that nothing will be different. The pace of change is too rapid and the intent of the change too clear to allow this luxury. The plain fact is that our being accepted in North Carolina as a basic part of the curriculum does not guarantee our achieving a permanent place in it. What will accomplish that affirmation will result from our ability to demonstrate that we are indeed a fundamental part of the curriculum and are related to the rest of the schools' course of study and that instruction and improvement of student learning are fundamental to the programs we serve. It is extremely important that we show evidence that we are fully integrated into the basic curriculum and not merely a desirable adjunct to it. Whatever changes may occur in public education, the fundamental premise that it is an initial preparation for adult life remains as it has always been. Our goal continues to be, more than ever, to provide for students an education in the arts reinforced through the recognition that the arts do not exist alone, but are an integral part of life. The specifics that need to be carried out are in the North Carolina Teacher Handbook Arts Education K-12. Achieving these will not only strengthen the

relationship of the arts to the total curriculum but will necessarily enhance arts education programs as well. This does not imply working longer or harder but rather in alternative ways that demonstrate our commitment to producing students who are proficient in reading, writing and mathematics, and to a quality education for all students.

For more information contact:
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Evaluation Form

Your suggestions and insights are needed to improve curriculum products. Please review **Arts Education K-12: Integrating with Reading, Writing, Math and Other Areas of the Curriculum**. After considering the relevance and usefulness of this monograph to you and your work, please spend a few minutes to fill out this evaluation, detach the form, and return it to us. The more specific and clear any suggestions you provide are, the more useful and influential they will be. Thank you for helping us serve you and your students better.

Rate the following statements from 1-5, with 1 being poor, and 5 being excellent.

		Don't Know	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excel
1)	The introductory material makes it clear what the document is and what it will attempt to do.	Unsure	1	2	3	4	5
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5)	The document is useful to arts education teachers and others interested in arts education.	Unsure	1	2	3	4	5
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8)	The document incorporates appropriate arts education concepts and processes.	Unsure	1	2	3	4	5
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Suggestions or comments (You may use the back of this sheet if extra space is needed.):

Return to: Arts Education Consultants, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 301 North Wilmington Street, Raleigh, North Carolina 27601-2825